

February 14, 1969

Mr. John P. Sheffey
Executive Director
Atlantic-Pacific Interoceanic Canal Study Commission
726 Jackson Place, N.W.
Washington, D. C. 20506

Dear Mr. Sheffey:

Thank you for your letter of February 4. I do not think that the Science article, and certainly my own, had any intention of depicting you as callous about the bioenvironmental issues. For my part, I was mainly concerned that these matters would have a regrettably low priority in funding the preparatory studies, and I am happy to know of the urgent efforts that you are making in the same direction.

As you may gather from my own article, on the subject, I would hardly describe myself as an alarmist, and I have to agree that it is difficult to know exactly what lines of research will enable one to draw solid conclusions about the long-term consequences of cutting and, for that matter, not cutting the canal. This kind of uncertainty is itself a consequence of the very limited depth of insight that we have in many aspects of marine biology.

I would like to be able to follow this issue from time to time in my writing and would be happy to receive from you any amount of detailed material that may be developed under your auspices.

Sincerely yours,

Joshua Lederberg
Professor of Genetics